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27 November 1961

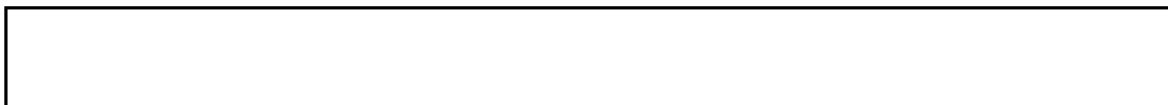


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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

USSR-Finland: Khrushchev's agreement to postpone military consultations "for the time being" probably reflects satisfaction with Soviet gains thus far as well as a desire to strengthen President Kekkonen's position at home by enabling him to claim an important success in dealing with the USSR. Moscow's pressure tactics have already led to the withdrawal of Kekkonen's chief rival in the January presidential election, Olavi Honka; a statement by Kennonen that the Soviet arguments regarding the danger of war in Europe had some validity; a reaffirmation of Finland's policy of friendly neutrality toward the USSR; and an agreement providing for a 25-percent increase in Soviet-Finnish trade next year.

Khrushchev probably believes the current developments will make it more difficult for Finland to resist future Soviet pressure. The Soviet premier, moreover, has left the door open for renewing his demand for military consultations if Finland's actions in the immediate future do not satisfy the USSR.

*Kekkonen, in a speech broadcast yesterday shortly after his return to Finland, described himself as "extremely satisfied" with the outcome of his visit to the USSR. He stated that "no secret conditions were proposed and no secret agreements have been reached." Kekkonen's citing of "Sweden's nonalignment" as one of the factors in "the guarantee of Soviet security in northern

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Europe" may be the forerunner of various Finnish initiatives aimed at persuading Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries to avoid any moves or actions which might possibly antagonize the Soviet Union. [REDACTED]

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Laos: In a reversal of their previous position, Boun Oum and Phoumi have accepted the security arrangements proposed by Souvanna and Souphannouvong for the impending Vientiane negotiations among the three princes for the formation of a coalition government. The proposal, submitted after fruitless preparatory sessions at the Plaine des Jarres and Vientiane, makes provision for each prince to be accompanied by a one-company security guard and for the "demilitarization" of an area within the city where the princes will be provided with residential and conference facilities. The princes' talks, tentatively scheduled for this week, will be preceded by a meeting of their representatives to make final arrangements. [REDACTED] (Backup, Page 1)

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DAILY BRIEF

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Laos

The talks on a coalition government now planned to be held in Vientiane would be the first meeting of the three princes since the October conference at Hin Heup. At that meeting, it was agreed that Souvanna should be designated by the King as "premier of the future provisional government of national union," and should, in order to facilitate the formation of the coalition, be empowered to call a further three-princes' meeting at a time and place of his choosing.

Subsequent to his meeting with King Savang on 18 October, at which time he was charged with the formation of a coalition cabinet, Souvanna made the first of several calls for a meeting of the princes at the Plaine des Jarres. Boun Oum and Phoumi repeatedly rejected these proposals on the grounds that there was no further need of a meeting in view of the King's selection of Souvanna to form a cabinet, that it would be demeaning for Boun Oum to visit the Plaine des Jarres considering Souphannouvong's refusal to accompany Souvanna to Luang Prabang, and that there would be no guarantee of personal safety at the Plaine des Jarres.

On 17 November, after receiving repeated rebuffs from Boun Oum and Phoumi, Souvanna dropped his insistence on the Plaine des Jarres and, supported by Souphannouvong, agreed to meet with Boun Oum at Vientiane. Preparatory meetings among the princes' representatives, held at the Plaine des Jarres and Vientiane, reached a deadlock over the issue of the princes' security in Vientiane. Souvanna and Souphannouvong each insisted on being accompanied by a one-company security group as well as "demilitarization" of a portion of Vientiane. Boun Oum and Phoumi on 24 November rejected these conditions, maintaining that such large contingents of opposition forces in Vientiane might lead to serious incidents.

Phoumi's abrupt about-face on the question of security procedures probably does not reflect any fundamental change in

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his attitude toward a Souvanna-led coalition. Phoumi is apparently convinced that any coalition led by Souvanna would inevitably be dominated by the Communists, and he will not easily be led to support such a government unless substantial concessions are granted by Souvanna and Souphannouvong.

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